

The Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program

NDCC 43-29.1

The loan repayment program for doctors of veterinary medicine is a state financed and administered loan repayment program designed to attract new food animal veterinarians to North Dakota to practice in areas of need. The focus of the program is to attract new graduates of veterinary schools although any veterinarian may apply if he or she has an outstanding educational loan and is licensed to practice in North Dakota. Each veterinarian selected may receive up to \$80,000 to repay educational loans. The amount of the loan repayment award may not exceed the amount of the educational loan(s). Three veterinarians may be selected per year. Each veterinarian that receives an award must enter a contract with the North Dakota Department of Health. The contract states the amount of time the veterinarian must serve in a community or communities and the amount of the award. The length of the service obligation and the amount of the awards are:

- A two year contract pays \$15,000 for the first year and \$15,000 for the second year; or
- A three year contract pays \$15,000 for the first year, \$15,000 for the second year and \$25,000 for the third year; or
- A four year contract pays \$15,000 for the first year, \$15,000 for the second year, \$25,000 for the third year and \$25,000 for the forth year.

Application Deadline:

Applications must be postmarked by January 31 each year. The State Health Council, in consultation with the State Board of Animal Health, considers each application at its next meeting. For dates of upcoming State Health Council meetings call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701-328-2372 or email lrodahl@nd.gov. Applicants are notified of the State Health Council's decision immediately after the Council's meeting.

Who may receive loan repayment awards?

Veterinarians who are licensed to practice and reside, or will reside, in North Dakota and have outstanding educational loans may receive loan repayment awards. Applicants do not have to be licensed at the time of the application. The first payment from the state is made after the veterinarian completes six months of full time service, however, the veterinarian remains responsible for making payments to the lending institution(s) in accordance with the policies and schedule of the lending institution(s). State payments are made directly to the lending institution(s). The veterinarian must begin providing full time services within six months of the State Health Council's approval. If the veterinarian cannot begin working within six months, he/she must reapply in the next calendar year.

Veterinarian selection criteria:

- The veterinarian must have graduated, or will graduate within six months of the application date, from an accredited college of veterinary medicine.
- In order to receive payment through the Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program the veterinarian must be licensed and in good standing with the North Dakota Veterinary Examiners Board to practice in North Dakota
- The veterinarian must agree to provide two, three or four years of full time service in one or more selected communities.
- The date the veterinarian may begin full time service is considered by the State Health Council.
- A letter from the applicant demonstrating a commitment to serve a selected community or communities is considered by the State Health Council.
- At least three letters of support from community leaders (other doctors of veterinary medicine, business leaders, users of veterinary services, economic development associations, etc.) demonstrating the need and acceptance of a new food animal veterinarian are considered by the State Health Council.
- Preference is given to veterinarians who will provide food animal veterinary services.
- Preference is given to food animal veterinarians who will serve a community or communities with less than 5,000 people per community.
- Preference is given to food animal veterinarians who will serve areas with large numbers of livestock and an inadequate number of veterinarians.
- The number of food animal veterinarians practicing within a service area of the selected community or communities is considered by the State Health Council.
- Preference is given to veterinarians who have not received financial student support from any state.

Community Selection Criteria:

- The size of the community or communities is considered by the State Health Council. Preference is given to communities with less than 5,000 people per community, next, to communities with 5,000-10,000 people and the lowest preference to communities with more than 10,000 people.
- The number of clients and livestock in a community's veterinary service area, the number of food animal veterinarians in the area and the driving distance between clients are considered by the State Health Council.
- Preference is given to communities that demonstrate a need for an additional veterinarian(s) and support for the loan repayment applicant.

Loan Repayment and Service Obligation:

Each veterinarian selected must enter into a two, three or four year contract with the North Dakota Department of Health. The first payment is made six months after the veterinarian begins providing full time service. Remaining payments are made on the anniversary date of employment. This means a period of eighteen months will elapse

between the first and second payments. If a veterinarian does not complete an entire year of service under this contract the amount to be paid for that year will be prorated.

The State Health Council may release a veterinarian from the service obligation if:

- The veterinarian completes the service requirement of the contract
- The veterinarian is not able to complete the service requirement of the contract because of permanent physical disability
- The veterinarian demonstrates extreme hardship or shows other good cause justifying the release
- The veterinarian dies

Application Material:

The North Dakota Veterinarian Loan Repayment application and related material are available on the North Dakota Department of Health website at <http://www.health.state.nd.us/oca/> or by contacting:

Gary Garland
Office of Community Assistance
North Dakota Department of Health, Dept. 301
600 E Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200

Ph: 701-328-4839
ggarland@nd.gov

OR

Susan Keller, DVM, State Veterinarian
North Dakota Department of Agriculture, Dept 602
Board of Animal Health
600 E Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505-

Ph: 701-328-2655
1-800-242-7535

skeller@nd.gov